



World War Victory Gardens

Then and Now

Victory Gardens became popular during World War I, and again in World War II. As part of the war effort, common foods like butter, milk, cheese, sugar, eggs, meat, canned goods, and coffee were rationed.

Fresh fruits and vegetables were not rationed, but due to the lack of labor and transportation it was harder to bring produce to market. The government encouraged citizens to plant "Victory Gardens."



Victory Gardens were promoted to support the war effort. They provided food for families and communities. Above is a poster released by the government encouraging civilians to plant gardens. The photograph is of a Victory Garden in New York City in 1943.

During the Second World War, Victory Gardens were planted in back yards, empty lots, and on rooftops. The government also promoted canning as a way to preserve excess vegetables and fruit, as seen in the poster on the right.



Modern Victory Gardens

Growing fruits and vegetables has been popular for centuries, even when not necessary because of a war. In the 21st century, the movement to have more sustainable food practices, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic, has seen the re-emergence of personal food growing.

Did you know you can re-grow some fruits and vegetables with just table scraps? Most gardens are started with seeds, but using scraps is a great way to reduce waste and experiment with your very own Victory Garden!

This activity will show you how to grow celery, but below are the instructions for several other common food scraps. Once you've grown celery, try another vegetable or herb!

Fresh Vegetables and Herbs:

- Celery
- Garlic
- Basil or Mint

Supplies:

- Food scraps
- Clean glass jar, cup, or mug
- Knife and a cutting board
- Potting soil and a pot



Step 1: Have a delicious snack with your celery! Save the bottom of the celery stalk.



Step 2: Carefully cut the bottom of the celery stalk so it's about two inches high.



Step 3: Put three to four toothpicks around the sides of the celery, close to the top.



Step 4: Fill a jar or cup with water and set the bottom of the celery in the water. The toothpicks will keep it from sinking.



Step 5: Leave in a well lit area and in 2-3 days, it'll start growing!



Step 6: When it's about two inches high, you can plant it in potting soil! Fill the soil to the original cut.

Garlic: Take a full bulb, and remove most of the exterior, but leave the cloves connected, place top down in about an inch of water and leave in the sunshine. Once the white roots grow down and green shoots are growing up, you can separate the cloves and plant each one individually.

Green Onions: Instead of throwing out the white bulbs, cut them a little longer, and stand them root down in a small jar. Set in the sun and change the water regularly. They will grow very quickly!

Fresh Herbs, like basil or mint: Cut a piece of herb where the leaves meet the stem. Place the new cutting in water and replace the water frequently until the roots begin to grow. At this point, you can plant it!